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SUBJECT: Niger: Four Political Prisoners Released

Ref: A)09 Niamey 1005 B)09 Niamey 646 C)09 Niamey 640

¶1. On January 5, two former parliamentarians and two administrative staff members were granted provisional release from prison. Former Parliamentarian and National Assembly (NA) Chief Treasurer Zanaidou Gado Sabo, former Parliamentarian and NA Deputy Treasurer Ibrahim Abalele, former NA Speaker's Cabinet Director Abdoul-Hayou Moumouni, and the former NA's Financial and Accounting Director were arrested and detained in September 2009 along with 35 other ex-parliamentarians on alleged corruption charges that the Opposition slammed as a witch hunt. (refs B and C).

¶2. Former Member of Parliament Gado Sabo was elected for a National Assembly seat during the October 20, 2009 legislative elections while in prison. (Note: Following the December 8, 2009 European Union (EU)- Government of Niger (GON) consultations, and in light of the Inter-Nigerien Political Dialogue (INPD) aim to resolve the country's political crisis (ref A), the GON made a commitment to waive all lawsuits against political opponents End note.)

ALLEN